THE INFORMER'S PRIVILEGE

The purpose of the privilege is the furtherance and protection of the public interest in effective law enforcement. The privilege recognizes the obligation of citizens to communicate their knowledge of the commission of crimes to law enforcement officials and, by preserving their anonymity, encourages them to perform that obligation. Roviaro v. United States, 353 U. S. 53 (1957) at 59.

The scope of the privilege is limited by its underlying purpose. Thus where the disclosure of the contents of a communication will not tend to reveal the identity of an informer, the contents are not privileged. Likewise, once the identity of the informer has been disclosed to those who would have cause to resent the communication, the privilege is no longer applicable. Roviaro v. United States, 353 U. S. 53 at 60.